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**Multimorbidity and Knowledge Architectures: An Interdisciplinary Global Health Collaboration**

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**What you should know about this research study:**

1. We give you this information sheet so that you may read about the purpose, risks, and benefits of this research study.
2. The main goal of research studies is to gain knowledge that may help future patients.
3. You have the right to refuse to take part, or agree to take part now and change your mind later.
4. Whatever you decide, it will not affect your regular care.
5. Please consider this consent form carefully. Ask any questions before you make a decision. Your participation is voluntary.

**Introduction**

We would like to invite you to take part in a research study about people living with multiple illnesses, sometimes called ‘multimorbidity’. We have asked you to take part because you are a health professional, public health practitioner, researcher, educator or policymaker in Zimbabwe. The study will be carried out by researchers from the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM), UK, and the Organisation for Public Health Interventions and Development (OPHID). The study is funded by a Research Fellowship in Humanities and Social Science awarded by the Wellcome Trust, UK.

**Purpose of this study**

Multimorbidity is increasing globally, including in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) such as Zimbabwe. Multimorbidity is challenging to address, because health research, care and policy have mainly been based on the treatment of single diseases. This study seeks to use qualitative methods to understand how people in Zimbabwe experience, understand and care for multimorbidity, as well as to understand current research and policy relating to multimorbidity in Zimbabwe. We will further work collaboratively with participants to co-produce a strategy for better responding to multimorbidity in the future. We will invite approximately 200 people to take part in our study. This includes people working on multimorbidity and related topics around the world, as well as patients, families, healthcare professionals, researchers and policymakers in Zimbabwe.

**Procedures and Duration**

If you agree to take part, we will of the study team will conduct an interview with you about your work. The interviews will include questions about your education and training, about your current work and daily routines, about your experiences and understandings of ‘multimorbidity’ and how it is managed, and about COVID-19. The interview will be conducted either virtually or face-to-face and will last between 60-90 minutes. We will ask your permission to digitally record and transcribe the interview. If you do not feel comfortable with the use of a recorder, notes will be taken instead. We may ask you for a follow-up interview at a later date if you are comfortable with this. In addition to interviewing you, we may request to spend periods of time with you as you go about your day-to-day work over the duration of approximately 3-5 days. The study member will attempt to learn more about what you do, especially regarding the management of people living with multimorbidities. The times during which the study member will spend time with you will be arranged with you so that your work/service delivery is not interrupted. You are free to alter, or cancel, any of these arrangements at any point. While spending time with you, the researcher will take field notes to aid their memory. We will also ask permission to take photographs during the research process to document your working environment, including buildings, clinical spaces, guidelines, tools and medicines.

We may also further invite to participate in a collaborative workshop that will include people representing a range of different disciplines and perspectives. During the workshop, we will consider patient case studies of multimorbidity and/or other preliminary findings from this study. You will be invited to share your understandings and experiences of multimorbidity and to consider ways in which research, care and policy could be improved to better respond to patient needs. The discussions held during the workshop will be used as a starting point for co-producing the interdisciplinary framework mentioned above. Workshops will be audio recorded and transcribed to accurately capture proceedings and ensure that the full diversity of perspectives are represented. Beyond interviews and workshops, the study team will endeavour to share drafts of the interdisciplinary framework with participants and will formally recognise contributions that you make to its development.

**Are there any possible risks if I take part?**

There are no direct risks associated with taking part in this study. However, due to the ongoing COVID-19 epidemic, personal protective equipment and hand sanitizer will be made available during study activities, and social distancing rules will be observed. The study might raise topics that are sensitive, for instance experiences of illness that might have resulted in adverse outcomes. We will be careful to phrase our questions sensitively and will be responsive to any signs of discomfort. You are free to refuse to answer any questions.

**Benefits**

There are no direct benefits to you if you choose to take part. However, you may derive benefit from knowing that this study will contribute towards improved management of multimorbidity.

Where travel is needed for the purposes of taking part in study activities, you will be reimbursed money ($10) for transport. Refreshments and a meal will be provided at workshops, and refreshments will be offered during interviews.

**Confidentiality**

All raw data will be stored on a password-protected file and will be shared with the research team only. We will use the information that you share in an anonymised form (without using your name or identifying features) in research outputs, which include scientific publications and reports. Where photographs are used in these outputs, any information that could identify you personally will be blurred out or cropped from the image. We will also share preliminary findings from the study with participants during workshops. Participants in the workshops will further be informed that the workshops are confidential, and that they should not share any of the information or discussions take place with anyone else. We will do our best to ensure that none of the information that we use can be directly linked back to you. However, because you may have a unique role, there are limits to our ability to ensure your anonymity. If you would prefer, we will not use direct quotes from you during workshops or in research outputs. Under some circumstances, the Medical Research Council of Zimbabwe and Research Council of Zimbabwe may need to review participants’ records for compliance audits.

**Data Archiving**

At the end of the project, data that can be anonymised fully to protect participants’ identities will be archived through the UK Data Service (UKDS), a reputable and widely recognised data repository. Details of how to access the data will be published with each study publication, and access will be granted to bona fide research users and beneficiaries based on a case-by-case request and approval process.

**Ethical Review**

All research involving human participants is looked at by an independent group of people, called a Research Ethics Committee, to protect your interests. This study has been reviewed and given favourable opinion by The London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine Research Ethics Committee (Ref 26469). The Joint Research Ethics Committee for the University of Zimbabwe College of Health Sciences and The Parirenyatwa Group of Hospitals (Ref X) and the Medical Research Council of Zimbabwe (Ref X) have also reviewed the study and have approved for the study to be conducted.

**Who is organising and funding this study?**

This study is funded by the Wellcome Trust, United Kingdom. London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine is the sponsor for the research, and they have full responsibility for the project including the collection, storage and analysis of your information.

**Voluntary participation**

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and to discontinue participation at any time without penalty.

**Offer to answer questions**

Before you sign this form, please ask any questions on any aspect of this study that is unclear to you. You may take as much time as necessary to think it over.

**AUTHORIZATION**

YOU ARE MAKING A DECISION WHETHER OR NOT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY. YOUR SIGNATURE INDICATES THAT YOU HAVE READ AND UNDERSTOOD THE INFORMATION PROVIDED ABOVE, HAVE HAD ALL YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED, AND HAVE DECIDED TO PARTICIPATE.

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Name of Research Participant Signature (or Thumb Print\*) Date

(please print) of participant

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Name of Staff Obtaining Consent Signature of staff Date

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Name of Witness\* Signature of witness\* Date

(\*Only required if participant is unable to read or write)

**Identity Protection, Audio Recording, Photography, and Use of Quotations**

**Statement of consent to be audiotaped, photographed and for anonymised quotations to be included.**

*(Please choose YES or NO by ticking the relevant box)*

* I agree to **being audio recorded Yes No**
* I agree to **anonymised quotations being included** **Yes**  **No**
* I agree to **photographs being taken Yes No**

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Name of Participant (please print) Signature (or Thumb Print\*) Date

of participant

(\*Only required if participant is unable to read or write)

**YOU WILL BE OFFERED A COPY OF THIS CONSENT FORM TO KEEP.**

If you have any questions concerning this study or consent form beyond those answered by the investigator, including questions about the research, your rights as a research participant or research-related injuries; or if you feel that you have been treated unfairly and would like to talk to someone other than a member of the research team, please feel free to contact the Medical Research Council of Zimbabwe (MRCZ) by telephone on 0242791193 or 08644073772. The MRCZ Offices are located at the following address: 20 Cambridge Road, Avondale, Harare.